

## **Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Our Name Change Process, with answers.**

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*Note: Potential submitted names to date (Aug 31) are at the end of this document.*

For any further questions, please contact the Name Change team at [namechange@uuwestport.org](mailto:namechange@uuwestport.org)

### **Why is a name change being discussed**

#### **Who started the process**

In 2021, the Board of Trustees sent a letter to the congregation with the heading of Possible Name Change Under Consideration.... After thoughtful discussion, the Board of Trustees voted in February, 2021: “To embark at this time on the process to consider a name-change for TUCW.”... Over the next eight or so months, discussions were held throughout our larger community including with various friends and members, town halls, church groups and committees, leaders of committees and of the church, and the congregation itself. The principal purpose of these gatherings was to listen to the congregation. If the response were favorable, the board decided it would call a Congregational meeting and a vote in November of 2021. The Board proposal was to change our name to The Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Westport, believing that the name captured the essence of who we are according to our mission statement. The addition of “Universalist” was to include both parts of our religious heritage, not just the Unitarian ancestry. And the change from “church” to “congregation” was proposed so that we can truly live up to the TUCW motto: “we are a diverse and welcoming congregation”.

At the Town Hall meeting in November 2021, our congregational members overwhelmingly indicated that they wished for a name change. However, the name selected by the Board of Trustees was not approved. The congregation wanted to select a name by a democratic process and the Board acted upon this by setting up a volunteer, lay-led Naming Committee whose mission was to facilitate a process for the congregation to decide on a name. The committee’s process will enable all members of our congregation to have the opportunity to suggest, advocate for, vote on and select a name.

#### **History of our name**

In 1949 we were established as The First Unitarian Fellowship of Fairfield County. In late 1964 the name became The Unitarian Church in Westport.

Although we are a part of the Unitarian Universalist faith community (Universalists merged with Unitarians in 1961) our current name recognizes only one half of this tradition.

#### **What are the reasons for a name change**

Choosing or changing the name of the congregation is an important decision, for it will help shape the congregation's vision and image.



TUCW is a diverse community of individuals and families from a variety of personal and faith traditions. We as Unitarian Universalists are free of creed and dogma, and open to people of all backgrounds and beliefs and our name should reflect this. For many people removing the word “church” from our name is a good thing indicating more clearly our broad base. The terms “Congregation”, “Society”, “Fellowship”, and “Sanctuary” are possibilities. Including “Unitarian Universalist” in the name is another consideration. The Unitarians and the Universalists merged in 1961 forming the Unitarian Universalist Association. We are a part of this parent body.

These conversations have been going on for at least 30 years; it is time to resolve them.

#### **Will it change who we are as a community?**

Our community will continue to operate as usual.

## **The importance of a name**

A name for our TUCW community is an incredibly important part of our identity as a spiritual, religious congregation. It creates a sense of who we are, of our community in which we belong, and our place in the world. The name will be emblematic of who we are and it will also reflect our identity, spirituality, and how we represent ourselves to the community and wider world.

## **Criteria in selecting a name**

Let's think of who we are and what we should be known as. Let's focus on our identity and spirituality. The name is an identifying essence of Being-ness especially for us as a spiritual, religious congregation free of creed and dogma, and open to people of all backgrounds and beliefs.

## **Are there any restrictions on the kind of name to be chosen?**

The final name may be the same name we have now or one of the new names on the list.

## **What is the cost to change the name?**

The cost for a name change is estimated at \$10,000. This includes legal paperwork, stationery, signage etc..

## **Who decides what the name will be?**

OUR CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERS WILL DECIDE ON THE NAME using a democratic and consensus building process.

- The Congregation's voice will be heard through the acceptance of a broad list of names submitted from the congregation.
- The voting process ensures that the decision is one that comes from the congregation.

## **Who can submit names?**

Anyone can submit a new name option by contacting the Naming Committee via email at [namechange@uuwestport.org](mailto:namechange@uuwestport.org) until midnight on September 18, 2022.

## **How do I submit a name?**

If you have not done so, it is time to reflect on our identity and our spirituality and get creative. Think of potential names for community - any name - inclusive of our current name. Please submit your suggestions to the Naming Committee by writing to [namechange@uuwestport.org](mailto:namechange@uuwestport.org)

## **The role of the Naming Committee**

The role of this committee is to define a process to determine a name and to oversee that process – not to come up with the name itself. In other words, the charge to the naming committee is to shepherd the naming process.

The Naming Committee, will keep this process transparent and democratic, with all members of our congregation having the opportunity to suggest, advocate for, vote on a name, even if it is the current name. They have been soliciting names from June 2021 and have received to date over fifty potential names from our community.

The Naming Committee is comprised of six TUCW members, approved with great appreciation by the Board of Trustees: Randy Burnham, Luisa Francoeur, Carolyn Gundell, Rob Herman, Sudha Sankar and Rob Zuckerman

Contact the naming committee by writing to [namechange@uuwestport.org](mailto:namechange@uuwestport.org)

## Process – How will the name be selected

The Naming Committee uses as its keystone our UU Fifth Principle, “The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.”

- All individuals from the congregation are given a voice to submit names.
- They are encouraged to advocate for their names, have dialogues and discussions. The intention is to assist our community in opening minds to all voices, inviting new perspectives, and practicing the building of beloved community through trusted discussions. Members are encouraged to consider all strong options.
- Members will select the names by a voting process.
- As a result of building a climate for consensus, the final name to emerge in vote #3 shall be the one with the majority of votes cast.

## Time Line

- The deadline for the submission of names is September 18.
- Vote #1 will occur in person on September 25 and online through October 2 to select the top 10 names.
- Advocacy for a name submission will occur on October 16.
- Vote #2 will occur in person on October 16 and online through October 23 to select the top 3 names.
- The final vote from 3 names to 1 will occur online on November 12 and in person on November 13 using Ranked Choice Voting.
- The ratification of a new name will occur at a Congregational Meeting on December 11 after the service.

**Voting Process :** There will be three votes:

- Vote #1: complete list winnowed to 10, voting by any individual.
- Vote #2: 10 names reduced to 3, voting by members only.
- Vote #3: 3 names reduced to 1, voting by members only.

**Vote # 1** – In a ballot with all potential (40+) name options listed, anyone voting will check off up to ten names, but only 1 vote is allowed per name. All ten names checked are given equal weight.

The most popular top ten name options will be presented to the congregation.

The people who submitted these ten names may ADVOCATE for their names.

**Vote #2** – In a ballot with the ten name options listed, each voting member checks off up to three names, but only 1 vote is allowed per name. All three names checked get equal weight.

The top three name options will be presented to the congregation.

Continue the advocacy and discussion.

**Vote #3** – In a ballot with the top three names listed, each voting member RANKS the three names by preference on their ballot. This voting process is called Ranked Choice Voting. The objective is to arrive at a final selection with a minimum of divisiveness within our community.

If a name gets a majority of first-preference votes, that name is declared the winner. If no name wins a majority of first-preference votes, the name with the fewest first-preference votes is eliminated. First-preference votes cast for the failed candidate are eliminated, lifting the second-preference choices indicated on those ballots. A new tally is conducted to determine whether any name has won a majority of the adjusted votes. The process is repeated until a name wins an outright majority.

NOTE: Using Ranked Choice Voting allows voters to submit one vote for several alternatives in order of preference. The congregation does not vote again, the committee does the tallying iterations as stated above.

For further information on Ranked Choice Voting click on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Z2fRPRkWvY>

## **How to Vote?**

Voting will be accomplished in person or online.

## **Who can vote?**

For the first vote, anyone can participate.

Votes # 2 and #3 can only be submitted by members. The ratification vote in December will also be restricted to members.

## **Definition of a member**

As per our Constitution, a member in good standing is:

*“ARTICLE VI, section 1. Any person fourteen years of age or older may become a member of the Congregation by 1) signing the membership book, thus affirming agreement with and understanding of the purposes and programs of the Congregation and the Unitarian Universalist Association, and 2) indicating a willingness to join with other members in supporting the activities of the Congregation with their time and talent, and 3) making a documented financial contribution or making a recommendation to a donor advised fund.”*

Only members may vote on matters that come before the congregation.”

## **How will I know what is happening?**

Information is available in the foyer, in Soundings, on the website, and there will be announcements as needed at services

**Potential names submitted to date** (45 DIFFERENT NAMES) (note: “in” and “of” give a unique meaning which is why they have been separated)

### **Names using “in” Westport (14)**

The Unitarian Church in Westport

The Unitarian Center in Westport

The Unitarian Fellowship in Westport

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Westport

The Unitarian Universalist Community in Westport

The Unitarian Universalist's in Westport

The Unitarian Universalist's Congregation Open Home in Westport

Silver Brook: A Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Westport

Twin Bridges: A Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Westport

Unitarian Universalist Sanctuary in Westport

Unitarian Universalist Sanctuary and Community in Westport

Unitarian Universalists in Westport

Silver Brook: A Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Westport

Twin Bridges: A Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Westport

### **Names using “of” Westport (6)**

The Unitarian Fellowship of Westport  
The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Westport  
The Unitarian Universalist Community of Westport  
UU Congregation of Westport  
Unitarian Universalists of Westport  
The UU Sanctuary of Westport

**Other Names – not “church” , not in/of Westport (25)**

The Unitarian Fellowship  
The Unitarian Universalist Congregation  
Westport Unitarian Universalist's  
Silver Brook UU  
Silver Brook Unitarian Universalist Congregation  
Silver Brook Unitarian Universalist Fellowship  
Silver Brook: A Unitarian Universalist Congregation  
Bridges: A UU Congregation  
The UU Meeting House  
The UU Meeting House on the Sound  
All People's UU Meeting House  
UU Congregation at Lyons Plains  
The Unitarian Universalist Sanctuary  
Unitarian Universalist Sanctuary  
The Sanctuary  
Sanctuary  
Unitarian Universalist Society  
Unitarian Universalist Gathering  
UU Westport  
Open Home  
All People's UU Community  
All People's Unitarian Universalist Community  
Unitarian Universalist Community – Westport  
Unitarian Universalist Community  
Unitarian Universalist Sanctuary and Community